Nova Scotia Department of Education
Annual Accountability Report
For the Fiscal Year 2000-01

October 19, 2001

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Accountability Statement

The accountability report of the Department of Education for the year ended March 31, 2001, is prepared pursuant to the *Financial Measures Act* (2000). The *Act* requires the reporting of outcomes against the Department of Education business plan information for the fiscal year. The reporting of Department outcomes necessarily includes estimates, judgements and opinions by Department management.

We acknowledge that this accountability report is the responsibility of the Department management. The report represents, to the extent possible, a complete and accurate representation of outcomes relative to the goals and priorities set out in Department of Education Business Plan for 2000-01.

Jane Purves
Minister

Dennis Cochrane
Deputy Minister

Message from the Minister

It is my pleasure to present to you the Department of Education's first Accountability Report. This document reports on the Department's activities undertaken to meet the goals and priorities identified in the *Department of Education 2000-01 Business Plan*.

I am happy to report that we continue to make advances in providing adequate and safe schools to Nova Scotia children. Almost 12,000 students were provided with new facilities in 2000-01 and a new Code of Conduct was developed.

Over the past year, our partners have been working with the Department to undertake a review of the Special Education Policy. The work of this committee will go a long way toward helping to prioritize initiatives in Nova Scotia and will help to address challenges faced by educators and the department.

We implemented a new governance model in the Southwest region. This new model has two elected district boards who are mainly responsible for education programs and services, and a regional board whose main responsibility is administrative matters. An evaluation of this model will be undertaken in 2001-02.

I am pleased to note that, through our partnerships with the other organizations, we have been able to increase access to computers at both public schools and post-secondary institutions. We have also obtained additional funding for university research and development projects.

It is my pleasure to report that we have a new Nova Scotia Advisory Board for Colleges and Universities. This new board takes over the work of the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education and also takes on responsibility for community colleges.

I am enthusiastic about the work with our partners at the Nova Scotia Community College. This work has resulted in a closer alignment with apprenticeship training and college core programs in the trades, and increased accessibility to on-line learning. We have also implemented a new on-line application process for student financial assistance making it easier for Nova Scotians requiring assistance with their post-secondary education.

In closing, education continues to be the fundamental building block for Nova Scotians to become productive and contributing members of our prosperous society. With this in mind, my Department will continue to carry out those initiatives that will move us closer to achieving our goals and allowing each Nova Scotian in turn to reach theirs.

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1. Impact of Government Restructuring

As part of Departmental efforts to provide high quality education in the most efficient and effective manner, the Department was restructured to put a greater focus on the two primary areas of responsibility - public schools and higher education and adult learning. Responsibilities for a number of functions were redistributed to better co-ordinate similar and related activities. Three main program branches and three support units now report to the Deputy Minister.

The Program branches include the Public Schools Branch, including English program services, regional education, testing and evaluation, African Canadian Services, Mi'kmaq Services, Centre for Entrepreneurship Education and Development; the Higher Education and Adult Learning Branch, including universities, community colleges, adult learning, teacher certification and public libraries; and the Acadian and French Language Services Branch, including French first and second language.

The support units are Corporate Services, including finance, facilities management, information technology and human resources; Corporate Policy; and Communications.

In addition, the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education was replaced with the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities, with the new Board continuing on the Council's work with universities and taking on new responsibilities for community colleges and student assistance.

The branch responsible for marketing education services was transferred to the Department of Economic Development to facilitate greater coordination in marketing Nova Scotia in other countries - either for business development or encouraging foreign students to apply to our post-secondary institutions. The Labour Market Secretariat was also transferred to the Department of Economic Development and under that department will continue in its role to coordinate provincial input into the Canada/Nova Scotia Strategic Partnership Agreement. The Department of Education continues to have a strong role in this federal/provincial agreement and continues in its mandate to provide leadership in developing Nova Scotia's labour force.

Some responsibilities for school capital construction have been transferred to the Department of Transportation and Public Works to better coordinate infrastructure development and expertise in the Province. As well, the Career and Transition Services section has been transferred to the Nova Scotia Community College and the Internal Auditor's function has been assumed by the Department of Finance.

As a result of the 2000-01 budget reduction exercise and departmental reorganization, the Department's staff complement was reduced by about 41 full-time equivalents from approximately 420.6 to 379.6.[1]

[1]Note that the reduction in FTEs does not equal the number of people who have lost positions, as it includes staff who were transferred to other departments and vacant positions that were eliminated.

2. Departmental Goals

The goals providing a focus to the actions of the Department of Education in 2000-01 were:

- to provide quality public education and training,
- to promote access to post-secondary education,
- to use technology as an enabler,
- to ensure accountability,
- to address diversity through education, and
- to promote successful career transitions and lifelong learning.

3. Priorities for 2000-01

The priorities listed below were identified in the *Department of Education 2000-01 Business Plan*.

Goal 1: Providing Quality Public Education and Training

- Consolidate curriculum implementation in the public school system to focus on priority areas, with particular emphasis on math in the English school system and in science, math and French language arts in the French school system

- In order to fulfil the Department's mandate of providing adequate and safe schools and equipment, the Department will:
  - continue with its commitment to complete 32 new schools, with an additional seventeen schools slated for delivery by 2004
  - oversee the addition and alteration program for major renovations to existing school buildings
  - work with school boards and other provincial departments to identify and resolve environmental problems in schools

- The Department will continue to improve the environment in which our children learn. In 2000-01, this will include initiatives such as:
  - Implementing comprehensive guidance and counselling programs in Acadian schools
  - Supporting initiatives to reduce violence and promote a positive learning environment and lead an initiative to develop a code of conduct for students.
  - Implementing a system-wide enrichment initiative to support gifted students and students with special needs, provide professional development for individual program planning at the high school level, and introduce a guide for resource teacher services.
  - Continuing to work with school boards and parents to ensure there are a continuum of programming choices and services available within the school system to meet the special needs of students.
  - Continuing to support the Reading Recovery™ initiative by training new teacher leaders and assisting boards with training of Reading Recovery™ teachers.

- The Department of Education is committed to assisting the universities to obtain Canadian Foundation for Innovation grants.

Goal 2: Promoting Access to Post-Secondary Education

- Arrangements will be put in place to ensure the continued delivery of the federal and provincial student loans program.

- The Department will continue to work with the Community College system to improve opportunities for students who wish to bridge from the public school system into trades and skills training.

- The Department will continue to cooperate with public and private trainers in the development of alternate delivery strategies for apprenticeship training, including Internet delivery and classroom delivery outside of the traditional delivery schedules.

- The Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education will continue to advise the Minister on credit transfer and articulation agreements between the universities and community colleges.

- A mentorship program will be set up by the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Rehabilitation Programs and Services to assist students with disabilities who are leaving the public education system to enter NSCC technology programs.

Goal 3: Technology as an Enabler

- The Information Economy Initiative (IEI), a major investment in Nova Scotia's schools, universities, and communities, will continue in 2000-01.

- The Department is working with the Learning Resource Centres within the NSCC to develop and implement an assistive/adaptive technology system that will support students with disabilities pursuing skills training.

- The Department will provide a specialized career action program for post-secondary students which will mobilize available youth employment strategy resources.

- Through a partnership with the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation, 114 additional Internet workstations will be available in 56 of Nova Scotia's public libraries and 4 regional training centres will be established in Sydney, Truro, Halifax and Yarmouth.

- The Department will continue to work with the NSCC to make more apprenticeship programs available via the Virtual Campus.

- New apprenticeship training agreements will be entered into with training providers to ensure quality and accountability measures in the outcomes of apprenticeship training.

- The Department is developing an online application for financial assistance for post-secondary students which will improve services to our clients and reduce turnaround time for processing applications.

Goal 4: Accountability

- The Department is in the developmental stage of a Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia, based on the "Principles of Fair Student Assessment."
- Assessment development will continue with implementation of Chemistry 12, English 12, and English/Communication 12 beginning in January 2000, and Biology 12 and Physics 12 in January 2001.
- The Department will implement a new framework for undertaking new school construction and major school renovations.
- A pilot project will be implemented in the Southwest region to establish a new governance model for the public education system.

Goal 5: Addressing Diversity Through Education

- The Department has been involved and will continue to be involved in initiatives that meet the needs of African-Nova Scotians and Mi'kmaq students.
- A Racial Equity Policy is being developed for implementation in the next school year.
- A seat will be designated on each of the regional school boards for African-Nova Scotian representation.
- A framework will be developed to guide the delivery of English as a Second Language programs in the public school system.
- The Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education will continue to recommend support for targeted programs at Dalhousie University, Saint Mary's University and University College of Cape Breton to assist African Canadian and Mi'kmaq students, and students with physical challenges.

Goal 6: Promoting Successful Career Transitions and Lifelong Learning

- Through extensive partnering, the Department is developing a framework to support an adult basic education system which is accessible, affordable and connected. *The Adult Basic Education Initiative* is exploring the development of a common credential for adult learners seeking high school completion.

- Work is underway to strengthen the 27 community-based networks that participate in the Nova Scotia Community Learning Initiative.

- To strengthen the focus on literacy, two joint federal/provincial committees have been established. One is focussing on literacy across the life span. The other has been established to examine various issues affecting the Early Years, including literacy in young children.

- Planning has begun on establishing a Job Opportunities Bureau, with membership from government, business, labour, universities, community colleges, and the public school system.

- *Grads@Work*, an initiative involving a customized job search program to promote career related work search for new post-secondary graduates, has been piloted in three locations.

- A joint federal/provincial working group developed a tool to assist career and guidance counselors to support Nova Scotians in their career planning. This tool, *Labour Market Information @ Work in Nova Scotia: a Guide for Practitioners*, will be released in the Spring.

4. Departmental Accomplishments

Goal 1: Providing Quality Public Education and Training

Curriculum implementation:

Beginning in September 2000, three new Atlantic Canada mathematics courses were implemented in grade 11 (including an advanced mathematics course), and a new Atlantic Canada science curriculum was implemented in grades 9 and 10. Implementation of these courses was supported by the provision of textbooks for each student, course specific teaching resources, and professional development of teachers (including two days of mandated in-service programs for teachers). Software and equipment to support the implementation of grade 9 science was also provided to each school. New curricula for Biology 11, Physics 12, and Chemistry 12 were implemented in September 2000.

In co-operation with other Atlantic provinces, the Department developed new curriculum for grade 12 mathematics.

Most of the new curriculum for science and mathematics for French First Language students have been finalized. A Calculus course, as well as advanced course options, have also been developed. The French language arts curriculum from Primary to Grade 8 was piloted and a draft version of the French language arts curriculum for Grades 9 to 12 was prepared through the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (APEF).

French learning resources for Science 9, Science 10 and Global Geography 12 were provided to all schools offering these courses in French second language programs. The APEF math curriculum document for grades 4 to 6 was translated for use in elementary French immersion programs. Learning resources for Core French were piloted and evaluated.

From June to August 2000, the Department conducted a consultation regarding the proposal that Canadian History become a requirement for all students in high school. In August 2000, the Department confirmed that this requirement would be introduced for students entering grade 10 in September 2001. The Department began the development of a new Canadian History 11 course that will be piloted in 2001–02 and implemented in September of 2002.

As part of its strategy for early literacy success, the Department introduced the *Active Young Reader: Grades Primary–3* (*Jeunes lecteurs actifs —3*) initiative in Anglophone, Acadian and French Immersion schools. This initiative ensures an uninterrupted block of time in grades primary–3 focussed on reading instruction, reading, and related activities. Teachers were provided with professional development and an array of French and English resources.

The Department, in cooperation with other Atlantic provinces, developed the *Atlantic Canada Reading Assessment Resource*. This resource was provided to every school for use in primary-3 classrooms. As well, an *Early Literacy Assessment Resource: Primary - 3, French Immersion* was developed within an Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation project.

New schools and renovations:

In the 2000-01 fiscal year, 23 of 32 new P3 schools were completed, providing new facilities for 11,250 students. The total value of the 23 school completed in 2000-01 is $224,551,000. Eight of the 32 schools had previously been completed in 1999-2000; the remaining P3 project will be completed in the 2001-02 school year. In addition to these new schools, major retrofits and additions were completed in four schools (École du Carrefour du Grand Havre, Yarmouth Junior High school, Digby Regional HighS chool, and Boularderie Consolidated School). The value of these four retorfits/additions is $24 million.

The administration and control of the Isle Madame District High School was transferred to Conseil scolaire acadien provincial to be utilized for French first language instruction. This allowed the province to avoid the costs of constructing a new school in the Petit du Grat area. The transfer of administration and control of the Isle Madame District High School and the construction of a new Ste Anne du Ruisseau school for the Conseil scolaire acadian provincial will fulfil the Department of Education's responsibility to provide homogeneous French First Language schools by September 2001.

Continuing to improve the learning environment:

A comprehensive guidance and counselling program was implemented in Acadian schools.

The Observation Survey for Early Intervention in Writing and Reading was developed and made available to Acadian schools.

A provincial Code of Conduct was developed for release in the Fall of 2001. Training teachers in Cooperative Disciplines as part of the Safe Schools initiative is underway. Two supporting resources are under development: a new Discipline Handbook and a teachers resource to address behavioural challenges.

As part of the process to develop a plan for addressing the need for additional resources for children and youth with special education needs, a review of the progress made in implementing the provincial Special Education Policy was undertaken. The review was undertaken by a committee with representatives from the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Nova Scotia School Boards Association, all major groups representing children with disabilities and government departments. The report of the committee was released in September 2001.

Implementation of initiatives for gifted students and students with special needs was postponed as a result of the review of the Special Education Policy.

As part of the Department's continued efforts to support the Reading Recovery ™ initiative, four new Teacher Leaders were trained in the 2000-01 school year, for a total of eleven leaders in the province.

Assist universities in obtaining grants:

A total of $6.7 million in Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) grants was awarded to Nova Scotia institutions in 2000-01, to enhance innovation, to promote private sector involvement in research and development, and to help retain our best university researchers and teachers in the province. Over this time period, $1.5 million in matching funds was awarded from the Economic Diversification Agreement (EDA). Note that EDA funding is awarded after CFI awards are approved, and therefore only two (of 16) 2000-01 awards received matching funds in 2000-01, along with two 1999-00 awards.

A total of 20 research chairs were awarded to Nova Scotia in 2000-01 through the federal Canada Research Chairs Program, with 54 awards projected over the remaining four years of the program. Only a small percentage of the Chairs awarded have been appointed to date.

Goal 2: Promoting Access to Post-Secondary Education

Student loans program:

The Department was able to negotiate a one year extension, ending on July 31, 2001, to the financing contract with Royal Bank of Canada for the Nova Scotia Student Loan Program. This agreement ensured that eligible students would continue to receive provincial student loans. However, citing the high cost of defaults, lenders were no longer prepared to share this cost. The Royal Bank was the only lender willing to finance student loans at the student level but only because the Province assumed the full cost of loan defaults.

Apprenticeship training:

- Liaison with NSCC during the development of two-year core programming has led to closer alignment between apprenticeship training and college core programs in the trades.
- Cooperation with University College of Cape Breton resulted in offerings of apprenticeship training in the Halifax area on a full-time and part-time basis.
- In response to local needs, training for the Welder trade was offered on a part-time basis in the Yarmouth area.
- Additional programming has been developed for delivery via the Internet in the following areas: Gas Fitter, Carpenter, Plumber, Machinist, and Oil Burner Mechanic.

- Internet course availability, through the NSCC Virtual Campus, for each program of training has increased.
- Since 1998, a total of 557 students have registered in 1608 apprenticeship courses via the Internet.

Colleges and Universities:

In the Fall of 2000, the Nova Scotia Council on Higher Education was replaced by the Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities. This Board is responsible for co-ordinating the advice on universities, community colleges and student assistance, thereby strengthening the Minister's ability to address issues like credit transfer and articulation agreements.

During the 2000/01 school year the Nova Scotia Community College (NSCC) and Rehabilitation Programs and Services of this Department worked collaboratively to identify students with disabilities in the public education system who wished to pursue post-secondary training at NSCC. In the first year of this mentorship program a significant number of students with disabilities and their parents met with NSCC and Department staff in an attempt to identify the exceptional needs that must be met for the students' successful participation in skills training.

In the second year of this mentorship program (2001/02) through the financial support of Rehabilitation Programs and Services, a students with disabilities recruiter will be employed by NSCC to increase the representation of Nova Scotians with disabilities in the Community College programs.

Goal 3: Technology as an Enabler

Installation and support of more than 6200 computers in 181 secondary schools was completed through the Canada-Nova Scotian Information Economy Initiative. Coupled with enhancement of the EDnet wide area network at no cost to schools, every school now has access to significant bandwidth and access province wide to an on-line periodical database. Through the latter, every student and teacher in grades primary to 12 has access in school, at home and through public access sites to a wide range of periodicals which would have previously only been accessible in major urban centres. The Information Economy Initiative (IEI) provided 16,800 days of professional development to teachers across the province (6,800 days in 2000-01).

Through IEI, the Acadia Institute for Teaching and Technology, the Dalhousie Global Information Networking Institute and UCCB's Centre for Excellence in Information Technology have been assisted with hardware and software acquisitions which have allowed them to expand student enrolments and to work with the private sector to further develop Nova Scotia's information technology sector.

The Department of Education has worked collaboratively with the Nova Scotia Community College in establishing, at each Community College campus, assistive technology computer workstations for students with disabilities pursuing skills training. Students with disabilities are receiving training by Department of Education staff on the specialized software programs that reflect their disability related needs.

The specialized career action program was put on hold as a result of Career and Transition Services being moved to the NSCC. Currently there are no plans to implement this initiative.

The Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation made $855,300 available, to 56 eligible Nova Scotia libraries, for the purchase of computer hardware and establishment of training labs. The new equipment and the training labs have allowed Nova Scotia's regional libraries to acquire grants in excess of $700,000 to provide training and other programs to introduce technology to the public.

The Department has signed an apprenticeship training agreement with NSCC to ensure quality and accountability measures in the outcomes of apprenticeship training. An agreement with University College of Cape Breton is pending.

The on-line application process for student financial assistance was developed during 2000-01 and was implemented in the summer of 2001. This on-line process will allow students to submit applications on-line, and obtain application status and deficiency information.

Goal 4: Accountability

Important measures for accountability are provided by common assessments that are developed by the Nova Scotia Department of Education and by national and international bodies, and administered to students in Nova Scotia public schools. The results of the assessments inform us about the performance of our education system. They give the Department, school boards, teachers, and the general public valuable information about the achievement of students.

- The Department is continuing to develop a Program of Learning Assessment for Nova Scotia (PLANS), based on the provincial curriculum, measurement standards, and the "Principles of Fair Student Assessment." PLANS comprises testing in elementary, junior high, and senior high schools, and the regular reporting of results.

- At senior high school, Atlantic Canada Examinations are administered to grade 12 students in English Language Arts and the Sciences. Examinations for grade 12 Mathematics are in development. During 2000-01, grade 12 students wrote Biology 12, Biologie 12, Chemistry 12, Chimie 12, English 12, English/Communications 12, and Physics 12 examinations. The examinations count for 30% of students final marks.

- A junior high school mathematics assessments was field tested during 2000-01 in preparation for administration to grade 8 students in 2002-03.

- During the fiscal year, all grade 6 math teachers received a full day of in-service related to a new mathematics assessment. The assessment will be administered to all grade 6 students in the spring of 2001.

- Nova Scotia students engage in national and international testing as part of PLANS. The national School Achievement Indicators Program tests 13- and 16-year-old students in mathematics, writing and reading. At the international level, 15-year-old students participate in the Program of International Student Assessment (PISA) along with other Organization for Economic Co-operation and Development countries. Information from these assessments compares the performance of Nova Scotia students with the performance of students in other national and international jurisdictions. PISA was administered during the 2000-01 fiscal year and a public report is in preparation.

In the Fall of 2000, the Department of Education consulted with the seven school boards concerning school capital needs. Of the 469 school buildings, school boards identified priority needs for 103 schools. The value of these requests is $655 million. The School Capital Construction Committee evaluated the school board requests and rationalized these requirements recommending 84 school capital projects. The estimated value of the 84 projects is $348.2 million.

It was recognized that, in many cases, projects needed to be addressed on an urgent basis to ensure the integrity of major building components be maintained. A program of enhancing and rreplacing major building components will address the major environmental issues in school buildings. To address this issue, funding allocations would need to be approved to respond to critical building issues and the remainder of the building requirements would be funded over a longer term. The Department of Education will be submitting a list of critical projects to be considered for funding on an annual basis.

Currently a new governance model is being piloted in the Southwest Regional School Board. The Southwest region now has two districts with elected board members: the South Shore District, comprising Lunenburg and Queens counties; and the Tri-County District, comprising of Shelburne, Yarmouth and Digby counties. The districts are mainly responsible for educational issues, while the Regional Board is mainly responsible for financial and operational management issues. The pilot will be evaluated during 2001-02.

Goal 5: Addressing Diversity Through Education

An African Percussions (social studies - junior high) unit was developed and implemented, as well revisions were made to African Canada Studies 11. Professional development was provided for teachers of these courses.

Financial and professional support was provided to the community-based Academic and Culture Enrichment Program for African Nova Scotian students, and to four school readiness (Africentric pre-school) programs.

The Department is currently engaged in the final stages of the development of a Racial Equity Policy for Nova Scotia's education system. This policy will outline the department's commitment to promoting equity in our public school system and will ensure that the needs of all students are supported through the development and implementation of specific programs, and resources to meet the needs of the diverse communities that make up our Nova Scotian society. The policy will also support the work done by school boards to develop their own racial equity policies and will provide an overall provincial framework to ensure consistency. The release of the Policy is planned for November 2001.

The African Nova Scotian community now has a direct voice in the planning and management of public education through the inclusion of African Nova Scotian representatives on the school boards. The Department worked with the Council on African Canadian Education and the African Nova Scotian community to facilitate the election process.

The Department continues to develop resources to support Mi'kmaq cultural awareness by working to promote inclusive curricula. Revisions to Mi'kmaq Studies 10 to fulfil the requirement for a Canadian History credit are underway. Professional development has been provided to Mi'kmaq guidance counsellors. In support of the delivery of Mi'kmaq language, two schools have successfully delivered Mi'kmaq language through video conferencing which may open the doors to Mi'kmaq language being available in other public schools in the province.

Advances in technology have enabled a pilot in teaching the Mi'kmaq language, using video conferencing, to native students in Milford by linking to a class with a qualified Mi'kmaq educator in Sydney.

Work continued on the development of guidelines for English as a Second Language programming and services.

The Department provided university and post-secondary scholarships to 198 African Nova Scotian students. As well, in an effort to make teaching services reflective of the cultural diversity of the province, scholarships were provided to encourage graduates to pursue teaching careers. Scholarships were also provided to African Nova Scotians to encourage more students

to study science to help alleviate the under-representation of African Canadians in the science profession.

The Nova Scotia Advisory Board on Colleges and Universities provided targeted funding to Dalhousie University for the Transition Year Program (a university preparatory program for members of the Mi'kmaq and African Canada communities), to the University College of Cape Breton for the Mi'kmaq Studies Program, and to Saint Mary's University for the Atlantic Centre for Disabled Students.

The Nova Scotia International Student Program welcomed 185 international students to Nova Scotia secondary schools during the 2000-01 school year. The students were from nine different countries. These students stayed with Nova Scotia families in communities throughout the province. Forty secondary schools and five of the regional school boards participated in this program.

Goal 6: Promoting Successful Career Transitions and Lifelong Learning

In November 2000, the Department announced the creation of the Nova Scotia School for Adult Learning. The school is an administrative body within the Department which will coordinate adult education programs from basic literacy to high school completion. The Department has established a number of provincial task teams as well as seven regional planning teams to ensure multi-agency collaboration and partnership. The Department will also administer the new High School Diploma for Adults delivered by colleges and school boards.

The Nova Scotia High School Diploma for Adults, available on September 1, 2001, is a new credential endorsed by the Department of Education. It is designed to meet the needs of adults who do not have a recognized high school diploma and who wish to acquire the skills necessary for further education, training, and employment. The Diploma is an alternative but equivalent credential to the high school diploma. Based on a 12 credit system, and recognizing credits obtained from both the Public School Program and the Level 4 Adult Learning Program, the Diploma is a common credential which allows two systems to work together. It recognizes both formal and informal learning obtained since school leaving through a Prior Learning Assessment and Recognition process. Equivalency credits from a variety of educational institutions will also be considered.

Work is underway to strengthen the 27 community-based networks that participate in the Nova Scotia Community Learning Initiative. This includes requesting more accountability regarding learner data, program and curriculum standards, and organizational plans. To support community-based and workplace learning, adult education practitioner training is being developed or enhanced, including Tutor and Instructor Training and Certification, Workplace Education Training and Certification, and curriculum and outcomes-based workshops.

During the past year, two professional development sessions were offered and three customized curricula were developed to support workplace education instructors. In addition, the Department finalized the second group of modules for the Workplace Education Instructor Certification Program. These new modules are being made available to instructors this fall at a three day provincial institute. *Working in Partnership: 2001* has been developed by a joint steering committee made up of business, labour and educators. It is co-sponsored by the Department and the National Literacy Secretariat.

The Department partnered with community organizations and the National Literacy Secretariat to host a provincial conference for community-based literacy practitioners in the spring of 2001. Over 100 participants attended. Through partnerships with the literacy community, the Department supported the development of a number of student assessment and program evaluation projects aimed at ensuring enhanced program quality for adult learners.

The Department has co-chaired the Federal Provincial Literacy Committee as well as participated on the four regional Human Development Partnership Committees associated to the Labour Market Development Agreement. Literacy is one of the priorities for joint federal/provincial action. The Department has played a leadership role on the Literacy Action Teams which have supported literacy projects throughout the province.

In March of 2000, the Nova Scotia Youth Secretariat made a presentation to Cabinet recommending that the Secretariat be reconstituted into the Job Opportunities Bureau (JOB). The proposal was not approved by Cabinet. However, a major component of the proposed JOB was accomplished with the launching of the Youth Secretariat's interactive web site. The department was involved in the development of this new site which provides youth with a portal into information related to education, training, employment, career development and youth participation.

The *Grads@Work* initiative was part of the work of Career and Transitions Services (CATS). This work has not been continued since CATS moved to NSCC.

The *Labour Market Information @ Work in Nova Scotia: a Guide for Practitioners* was released in the Spring of 2000.

5. Financial Results

The 2000-01 budget and actual expenditures[2] for the Department of Education are as follows:

	Budget	Actual	Variance
Senior Management	$407,000	$441,316	($34,316)
Communications	215,000	251,282	(36,382)
Corporate Policy	2,468,500	2,042,425	426,075
Corporate Services	4,677,000	7,002,904	(2,325,904)[3]
Public Schools	15,273,800	16,181,143	(907,343)[4]
Higher Education & Adult Learning	26,988,700	32,183,321	(5,194,621)[5]
Acadian & French Language Services	(220,000)	0	(220,000)
Public Education Funding	672,487,000	663,262,857	9,224,143[6]
Other Grants	9,613,000	9,863,000	(250,000)
Credit Allocation	7,612,000	7,828,802	(216,802)
Community Colleges	57,141,000	58,768,300	(1,627,300)[7]
Teacher's Pension	45,805,000	46,113,358	(308,358)
School Amortization	16,364,000	28,759,905	(12,395,905)[8]
sub total	**$858,832,000**	**$872,698,613**	**($13,866,613)**
Assistance to Universities	201,232,000	203,488,693	(2,256,893)[9]
Total	**$1,060,064,000**	**$1,076,187,506**	**($16,123,506)**

6. Highlights from Human Resources

[2]Actual 2000-01 expenditures on a consolidated basis are not yet available from the Department of Finance. Consequently, these figures do not include results of operations of Regional School Boards, the Nova Scotia Community College and Collège de l'Acadie.

[3]The $2,395,904 over expenditure occurred as a result of planned school repairs that were expensed in the current period as they did not meet TCA capitalization thresholds.

[4]The over expenditure of $907,343 was related to the Information Economy Initiative. This over expenditure leveraged $2.0 million in federal cost shared funding.

[5]This over expenditure is the result of an accrual of $12 million for potential losses associated with the guaranteed student loan program and unspent funds in other areas.

[6]Operating expenses were underspent as a result of a change in the accounting treatment of lease payments associated with schools leased from private developers.

[7]This over expenditure resulted from additional funding provided to the Community College to acquire technology and an unbudgeted commitment by the Department.

[8]This over expenditure occurred as a result of the capitalization of lease payments associated with schools leased from private developers and the accelerated amortization of furnitures, fixtures, equipment and technology acquired from private developers.

[9]This over expenditure occurred as a result of providing additional capital funding to St. Francis Xavier University.

Mission: Advance the strategic/business objectives of Government and the Department of Education by providing necessary human resource expertise and support to departmental management.

Goals:

1. Develop, in partnership with management, a productive, valued employee team focused on accomplishing the strategic/business objectives of Government and the Department of Education.

2. Develop, in partnership with management, an employee team that reflects Nova Scotia's diverse population.

3. Provide management with human resource services which are effective and practical.

Provincial Teachers Labour Relations:

The Human Resource Division of the Department has established an improved communications network with its functional counterparts in Regional School Boards so that both general information and issues-based discussions are effectively approached on common collective agreement matters.

Occupational Health and Safety Program:

The Department has continued to advance its occupational health and safety (OHS) program, focusing on the following: OHS Program orientation has been provided to all our managers and their secretaries. The majority of our employees have received OHS Program awareness. A comprehensive long term ergonomic strategy was approved and is being implemented. To assist in the delivery and maintenance of core training, a database has been developed in house. All of our facilities have been inspected and corrective action taken as required. OHS is an agenda item at Senior Management meetings on a monthly basis and also for staff meetings. The Department has fully implemented its Scent Reduction Policy.

Corporate Human Resource Priorities:

The Human Resource Division:

- supported the Department's restructuring which put a greater focus on the two primary areas of responsibility - public schools and higher education and adult learning, and resulted in 41 fewer FTEs;
- continued to assist managers and employees in implementing government's new MCP (management) employee performance planning and evaluation system, which focuses on linking business objectives with individual performance goals;

- established a working group in relation to performance management for unionized employees;
- provided input to assist the Department of Human Resources in preparing for NSGEU collective bargaining;
- participated as a member of government's MCP (management) classification review project steering committee;
- offered input in the planning stages of government's bargaining unit classification review project; and
- continued to assist in case management of employee attendance/disability.

Training and Development activities focused on:

- roll-out of government human resource policy initiatives (e.g., OH&S, employee performance management, sexual harassment);
- design and delivery of internal employee training programs (230 person days);
- external training coordination (in excess of 270 person days);
- one-on-one and group sessions with managers and employees for purposes of coaching, needs assessment to design internal development programs or plan outside referrals; and
- continued efforts to entrench the value of ensuring employees have the skills needed to advance Department and Government business objectives.

The Human Resources Division also provided feedback and support to the Public Service Commission in relation to its planned succession management and diversity initiatives.

7. Highlights from Information Technology

EDnet:

EDnet is a Wide Area Network providing over 600 education and related organizations with cost effective data communications for connection to the Internet, distance education, and administrative computer applications.

In 2000-01, with assistance from the Information Economy Initiative, an agreement was established with MTT to have all sites upgraded to a minimum of ADSL (where available), 512Kbps for sites with less than 40 computers, or T1 (1.5Mbps) for sites with more than 40 computers or currently using video conferencing. Work to implement the new network began in December 2000 to be completed in fiscal year 2001-2002. This initiative provides up to 16 times increase in bandwidth at no increased cost to sites. Consequently, access to on-line learning and administrative applications has been increased.

Also, use of the centralized e-mail service (web mail) grew to approximately 95,000 students and teachers, and by the end of 2000-01 there were 188 schools using web space managed by the Department. The technology provides for student use of this web space as authorized by school administration.

School Board Standard Administrative System:

Support for the existing School Board Standard Administrative System was continued in 2000-01, and significant progress was made during the year to move forward with the Integrated Data Management Project, an expanded initiative intended to address all of the data management needs of Nova Scotia's public education system. A business case was prepared providing information about funding and staffing levels needed to implement the system, expected benefits, technical requirements, and implementation approach and timing. This work will be continued in the 2001-02 fiscal year with implementation of stage 1 software and further planning for subsequent stages.

E-Government Services:

During 2000-01, an online student assistance application and an online learning resources ordering system were created. This activity produced the technology infrastructure needed to support electronic delivery of services and developed staff expertise in this area.

The online application for Student Assistance allows students to apply for student assistance electronically using the Internet. It includes functionality to submit applications on-line, and obtain application status and deficiency information. The online learning resource ordering system allows schools and boards to use the power of Internet e-business for online ordering of authorized learning resources and obtaining order status information. Both of these systems

eliminate substantial manual processing, reduce the time taken to process applications / orders, and significantly improve customer service.

On-line Catalogues:

On-line catalogues for all regional libraries were completed and in use during the year. By March 31, 2001, all but eight locations were running automated circulation. These eight came on-line during the summer of 2001.

Desktop Systems Initiatives:

Decisions around the Department's desktop productivity software were taken and software licences acquired. In addition, all of the planning to reorganize and upgrade Departmental local area network infrastructure was completed, and the required equipment was purchased.

Information Technology Strategic Plan:

The Department's three-year Information Technology strategic plan was not updated due to a focus on other activities.

8. Highlights from Financial Management

The Department continued to enhance its financial management processes, ensuring that timely forecasts were provided to senior management and central agencies, with sufficient information to both adjust activities and reallocate resources, and effectively communicate financial issues to decision makers. As a result of early identification of pressures and resources, additional funding was provided to regional school boards during the 2000/01 year to address increased energy costs.

Additionally, in 2000-01 Financial Management undertook responsibility to provide a full time equivalent (FTE) person-year monitoring, forecasting and pre-hiring budget approval service. As a consequence, the Department is better positioned in 2001-02 to effectively manage its human resources.

Regional school board cost pressures were determined through the work of the Education Funding Committee, a body with representation from the Department of Education, Regional School Boards and the Nova Scotia School Board Association. The funding distribution methodology was maintained in 2000-01, although it is intended to be more thoroughly reviewed for the 2002-03 fiscal year.

Financial reporting by funded external partners was improved during 2000-01 with monthly forecasts being provided by regional school boards. In addition, the Province established the capacity to monitor cash positions of almost all school boards.

Linkages and effective professional working relationships with central agencies - particularly Finance, Transportation and Public Works and Treasury and Policy Board - were developed and maintained. The goal of these relationships is to ensure consistency of purpose between the Department and central agencies and to promote a thorough understanding of the goals and activities of the Department.